

PEOPLE & THINGS

A "ROYAL" shot by Her Majesty the Queen at Balmoral will be one of the exhibits at the International Exhibition of Hunting Trophies to be held in Dusseldorf from October 16 to 31. The Queen is also sending from Hampton Court the antlers of a giant eighteen-point red deer from the collection of Elizabeth I.

The latter, which I have seen, is so majestic that Mr. Best of Rowland Ward's, who are organising the British entry on behalf of a private committee, suspected that it was carved from wood until chemical analysis proved otherwise.

Dik-Dik and Panda

THE British entries to the exhibition, the first held since the Goering exhibition of 1937, range in size from the 6ft. 6in.-span of the great deer of Elizabeth I to the one-inch span of an African dik-dik, and include what will certainly be a star entry, a giant panda from Sze-chuan, loaned by Sir Philip Broeklehurst.

Amongst the many other Royal trophies there will be an interesting piece of booty from behind the Iron Curtain—the great head of a Wallisch deer (or Shou) shot on the Tibetan frontier. This exhibit is from Sandringham.

Jumbo Profits

IT is thanks entirely to the support of private sportsmen in Britain and contributions from officers and men of the Rhine Army that Britain is being represented this year. The Government subscribed £3,000 to the Goering Exhibition, but this time the Treasury refused to put up a penny.

Everything down to the last detail has been planned by Mr. Best and the other members of the committee. Rowland Ward's will have their own stand at Dusseldorf.

I asked Mr. Best if business was otherwise brisk in the stuffing world and was surprised to learn that the firm have never been so prosperous, thanks to the recent opening of a branch at Nairobi.

"We still get a lot of little jobs in England," added Mr. Best, "but,

By ATTICUS

so far as the balance sheet is concerned, it takes an awful lot of foxes' pads to equal an elephant's."

The Deadlier Female

"THERE'S a four-inch bug on my window-sill and he's staring at me. What shall I do?" "Stare right back, madam. It won't hurt you."

These are the days when the Praying Mantis is abroad in the fields and streets of America, frightening the children and the housewives as it poses with its forelegs folded in an attitude of prayer.



eyeing the world with a cold and supercilious stare made more formidable by its ability to turn the head almost all the way round and, unique in the insect world, even look over its shoulder.

The American Museum of Natural History is so tired of receiving agitated telephone calls that it is now trying to persuade the public to treat the mantis as a pet and has published a leaflet on its feeding and habits, which, in the female, are cheerfully admitted to include eating her husband after marriage.

Saint Legend

IN the wall of the back garden of Glasgow House, Middleham, in Yorkshire, Mr. C. F. Wilkinson, the present owner of the property, discovered an old and curious plaque, and he has just deciphered the inscription. It commemorates the "honesty and skill" of racehorse trainer James Croft. In 1822 four horses from the Glasgow House stables, trained by Mr. Croft, walked the seventy-odd miles from Middleham to Doncaster to run in the St. Leger on Monday, September 16 of that year.

They came in first, second, third and fourth out of a field of twenty-three, and tradition has it that they passed the winning post in the order in which they left the stables.

The legendary feat is confirmed by John Orton's "Turf Annals of York and Doncaster," which covers the period 1769 to 1843. The four horses were Mr. Petre's brown colt, Theodore, Mr. Gascoigne's chestnut filly, Violet, the Duke of Leeds's grey colt, Professor, and Mr. Gascoigne's chestnut colt, Corinthian; and Mr. Orton notes that the second, third and fourth horses were all by the same sire.

Incidentally, the odds against Theodore, the winner, were quoted at 1,000-5 against.

Battle of the Bookish

THERE is a powerful resistance movement building up against the convention that John Donne should be pronounced John Dun.

Apparently the case for the Dun faction rests on the poet's excruciating puns, notably on his famous headline statement to the Press after his elopement with Anne

More: "John Donne—Anne Donne—Undone."

But who is to say that in those days "undone" was not pronounced "undonne"?

Strong forces are at work to re-establish, if only as a grateful tribute to Sir Winston Churchill's English usage, the phonetic pronunciation of our illustrious poet. And the rebels have an ally of surely decisive importance—Mr. John Hayward, who edited the Works of Donne both for the Nonesuch Press and for the Penguin Library, and whose literary taste and common sense are worth many battalions of donnish (? dunnish) pedantry.

A Genial Doge

IT is no secret that in the past twenty years many musical persons have been driven away from the ballet by the poor quality of the orchestral playing. It is, after all, difficult to concentrate on even the most stylish performance when the music sounds as if it were being played a hundred yards away on a very old comb.

One of the merits of last week's revival of "The Firebird" was the lustrous accuracy of the orchestra; and for this we have to thank Mr. Ernst Ansermet, the seventy-one-year-old Swiss conductor, who is unexcelled as an interpreter of Stravinsky.

In appearance a Doge born out of his time, M. Ansermet is a veteran of many musical battles. I fancy that even last week's fervent and affectionate reception seemed to him to lack the savour of the furious twenties. "It is not everywhere so," he said to me. "Why, even three years ago, in Vienna, I was whistled—and there was one who was crying 'Heraus!'—'Get out!'"

But on one point M. Ansermet was entirely in accord with his audience in London. "That Fonteyn!" he said. "She is magnificent!"

Read, Mark, Learn

THE readers of the American "Saturday Review of Literature" have just been competing to discover the longest English word in which not more than two letters of the alphabet are used.

For what the information is worth, the judges discarded such dictionary sludge as alala (ancient Greek war cry), seeee (Indian sand partridge), wawaw (West Indian hemp), and reerer (one who sins a second time), and have divided the prize amongst nineteen correspondents who suggested "deeded."

This piece of research seems to me about as useful as computing the number of full stops in a bottle of ink, which, according to "The Times," is well within the powers of all those now attending the conference in Birmingham of the Midland Society for Analytical Chemistry.

Overheard Dept.

DURING a week-end visit to Edinburgh a friend overheard two French connoisseurs discussing Mr. Michael Benthall's tumultuous production of "Macbeth."

"How was he called, the Macbeth?"

"Paul Rogers."

"Pol Roger? A likely name indeed! And I suppose it was the Widow Cluquet that we saw in the sleep-walking scene?"